

I waltzed into work the next day with my usual carefree attitude...

After a few minutes it finally hit me. That little wiry guy, always bursting with nearly uncontrollable energy was nowhere in sight...

No one said a word, but Dick got up from his seat across the table from me. He moved around the table on the side towards the door and reached for a newspaper wrinkled and folded at the middle of the table. Lifting it from the table he walked around the rest of the table until he was right next to me and set the paper in front of me...

I started to read the story...The man who had shot and killed his wife, then turned the shotgun on himself the previous day, the Ides of March, the day I turned twenty-five, was Hank. - *pages 385-386*

Before I started working at Beech, Charlie had met some girl at Targus... From that day forward I would hear about her a lot. I met her and I liked her at first, even wanted her myself since Charlie and Andrea didn't seem to be tied to each other. That feeling melted away after about an hour in her presence. Do you ever get the feeling when you're with someone even in a mix of other people and the someone leaves you with the impression that the someone thinks you're less than insignificant, and consistently demonstrates that thought with almost everyone else, until you finally realize that the someone only suffers from bloated self-importance to the point where the someone causes you to avoid the someone completely, making you wish that the someone would just return to the obscurity and unknown from which the someone came? Meet Andrea. "On-dray-uh," she corrected. But, of course. I apologize. I misspoke. I meant, you pompous f***... - *pages 390-391*

In the spring the newly elected President of the United States was stepping to his limo amidst the phalanx of security guards assigned to protect him when some lunatic with a fantasy about Jodie Foster rushed in among the phalanx and popped off five or six gun shots until finally being thrown to the concrete and subdued...

Inevitably I was asked what I thought about all of it, about possibly losing another President, am I not outraged? "In this country it is a proud tradition that, should you vehemently disagree with the politics, position and direction of the President of the United States, you just shoot him. We should also thank the National Rifle Association for guaranteeing the right of every lunatic to own, possess, and use a firearm. Without it, individual mutiny and treason would be *so much harder* to accomplish." - *pages 393-394*

"Ron's replacing me," Charlie stated with complete sincerity.

"What?!" I exclaimed.

"Walter Ego's gonna need a new guitarist," he added, "because I'm leaving soon for Florida."

"What the f*** are you talking about?"

"I'm moving to Florida."

"And what, pray tell, brought this ludicrous idea to your mind?"

Charlie twisted off the top of another beer and set it on top of the small frij. "Andrea's parents are moving back there," he informed me. "It's part of his job change with Martin-Marietta and they're paying for it. Andrea is going with them and they're taking me and all my stuff, too."

"You're going to Florida with her?"

"Yeah."

"Well, that'll be gone, too," I observed, staring at the foam bed Charlie lay sprawled across while I sat in the only chair.

"No, it's staying," Charlie advised. "It's yours."

"I don't want it. Take it with you, please."

"There's no room."

"In a big mover's van? Who says?"

"Andrea," he replied, looking away. "We'll have our own bed so there's no room for it."

"Figures it would be *her* idea," I commented, almost bitterly. "I have a new nickname for Andrea."

"Yeah?" Charlie inquired. "What is it?"

"It starts with a C." - *pages 401-402*